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General Assembly
Sixty-ninth session

Official Records

First Committee
25th meeting
Monday, 15 June 2015, 5 p.m.
New York

Chair: Mr. Rattray ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

Agenda item 5

Election of the officers of the Main Committees

Election of the Chair and the Bureau

The Chair: In accordance with rules 99 (a) and 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, this meeting has been convened to elect the Chair and other officers of the First Committee for the seventieth session of the General Assembly. As announced in advance, the Committee will also address the revision of the provisional programme of work and timetable for its seventieth session.

Members will recall that, pursuant to decision 68/505, of 1 October 2013, the Chair for the seventieth session of the Committee is to be from the Group of Western European and other States. I have the honour to nominate the candidate of that Group, His Excellency Ambassador Karel van Oosterom of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for the post of Chair of the seventieth session.

Ambassador Van Oosterom, an accomplished diplomat of his country, has dealt extensively with various issues relating to disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and the broad area of international peace and security. Prior to his appointment in August 2013 as the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations, he was the Director-General for Political Affairs in his country's Ministry for Foreign Affairs, where he served previously as Head of the Western European Division and Deputy Director of the European Affairs Department. From 2006 to 2011, Ambassador Van Oosterom was the Foreign Policy Defence Adviser to the Prime Minister, after having served at different times as Deputy Head of Mission, First Secretary and Third Secretary at the Netherlands Embassies in Beijing, Damascus and Ottawa, respectively. He also served in his country's Atlantic and Security Policy Department in The Hague from 1988 to 1992, and as Platoon Commander in the Grenadier Guards regiment of the Royal Netherlands Army from 1982 to 1984. Ambassador Van Oosterom holds a degree in contemporary history from Utrecht University and is a well-published author on management. I am therefore delighted to submit his candidature today as Chair of the seventieth session of the First Committee.

Since there are no other nominations from the Group of Western European and Other States, may I take it that, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedures of the General Assembly and established practice, the First Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to elect by acclamation Ambassador Karel van Oosterom of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as the Chair of the First Committee for the seventieth session of the General Assembly?

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of all delegations, I congratulate Ambassador Van Oosterom on his election. I am certain that he will receive the support and cooperation of each and every delegation in executing his mandate to guide the work of the seventieth session of the First Committee.

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We will now proceed with the election of the other officers of the First Committee for the seventieth session of the General Assembly, beginning with the two Vice-Chairs. Accordingly, it is my pleasure to present to the Committee the following nominations: for the Group of Asia-Pacific States, Mr. Abdulaziz Alajmi of Kuwait, and for the Group of Eastern European States, Ms. Lachezara Stoeva of Bulgaria.

Bearing in mind that the aforementioned candidates for the position of Vice-Chair have been endorsed by their respective regional groups, may I take it that the Committee wishes to elect them by acclamation?

It was so decided.

The Chair: For the position of Rapporteur, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States nominates Ms. Tasha Young of Belize. May I take it that the Committee wishes to elect Ms. Tasha Young of Belize by acclamation as the Rapporteur for the seventieth session of the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The Chair: Please allow me to express, on behalf of the Committee, warm congratulations to Mr. Abdulaziz AlAjmi of Kuwait and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva of Bulgaria as Vice-Chairs, and Ms. Tasha Young of Belize as Rapporteur for the seventieth session of the First Committee.

Regarding the remaining vacancy for Vice-Chair from the Group of African States, the Committee will hold elections upon notification by the Group of its nominated candidate.

I now give the floor to the chargé d'affaires of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations to make a statement on behalf of the Chair-elect, who I understand could not be here today.

Mr. Van der Vliet (Netherlands): I wish at the outset to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your words of congratulation to Ambassador Van Oosterom. May I add my appreciation for the excellent manner in which you conducted the chairmanship of the First Committee at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

On behalf of Ambassador Karel van Oosterom, who indeed could not be present here today, I would like to thank the United Nations membership for the faith it placed in the Kingdom of the Netherlands by electing Ambassador Van Oosterom as Chair of the First Committee at the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

The past year has witnessed some key developments with regard to multilateral disarmament, most notably the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in April and May here in New York. Although the Conference did not result in a consensus outcome, it made clear that our common goal of a global zero still stands firm. The only way forward is to make every effort to bridge our remaining differences on disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and to work together to achieve this common goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Major developments also occurred in the field of conventional arms. The entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty was made possible by shared political will and determination. It showed that multilateral efforts can be of great benefit for advancing our shared objectives on arms control, the reduction of conflicts and enhancing peace and security.

Ambassador Van Oosterom looks forward to helping guide the work of the First Committee to a successful conclusion. He asked me to assure you, Mr. Chair, that, to that end, he is fully committed to working with all States Members of the United Nations in an inclusive, transparent and efficient way. Ambassador Van Oosterom feels confident that with your support and that of the Bureau and the Secretariat, we will have a constructive and fruitful session.

Programme of work

The Chair: Before adjourning the meeting, I should like to draw the Committee's attention to the provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2015. As members will recall, the Committee adopted it at its 24th meeting, on 4 November 2014, and it was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in decision 69/520 of 2 December 2014, as contained in document A/69/449/Rev.1.

Under that programme, the Committee was scheduled to begin its work on 2 October 2015 and to conclude it by 4 November. However, on 29 December 2014, the Assembly adopted resolution 69/244, on the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, in which it decided that the plenary general debate, at its seventieth session, would begin on 28 September 2015. In order to avoid the

resulting overlap with the Committee's work, may I take it, therefore, that the Committee agrees to reconsider its provisional programme of work and timetable for 2015?

It was so decided.

The Chair: The Committee now has before it a revised provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2015, contained in document A/C.1/69/CRP.5/Rev.1, a copy of which was circulated in advance. According to the revised schedule, the Committee's work would begin on 7 October and conclude by 9 November.

May I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the revised provisional programme of work and timetable of the First Committee for 2015, as contained in document A/C.1/69/CRP.5/Rev.1?

It was so decided.

The Chair: I would like to use this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks once again to all delegations for their support and cooperation throughout my tenure as Chairman of the First Committee at its sixty-ninth session. I was fortunate to have had the benefit of a first-rate Bureau, which was a key element in ensuring the success of the First Committee's sixty-ninth session. I am also grateful for the dedication, professionalism and unstinting support provided to me by members of the Secretariat, in particular Mr. Kenji Nakano, Secretary of the Committee, and his team.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.